

What Is Claimed Is:

1. Apparatus for holding a plurality of stacked packages, said apparatus comprising:

a) a container having one or more side panels and a bottom panel defining an open top and an interior having one or more columns therein extending uninterrupted from said bottom panel to said open top and wherein said plurality of stacked packages may be placed for holding in said container; and

b) a package dispenser having a plate and one or more push rods having first end mounted to said plate in a generally normal orientation with respect thereto, and an opposite, free end;

whereby said dispenser may be engaged with said container by inserting said one or more push rods through said bottom panel, said push rod free end thereby engaging a package in said column located adjacent said bottom panel and, upon advancing said push rod further into said column toward said open top, said push rod pushing said plurality of stacked packages in said column out of said container through said open top.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, and further comprising a plurality of said columns formed in said container interior and a like plurality of rods mounted to said dispenser plate and positioned for alignment with said plurality of columns.

3. The apparatus of claim 2 and further comprising a hole formed in said bottom panel adjacent each column and wherethrough said push rod free end may be inserted into said container.

4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said container is formed of cardboard.

5. The apparatus of claim 1 and further comprising a plurality of discrete, parallel columns defined by a plurality of dividing panels positioned in said container interior.

6. The apparatus of claim 1 and further comprising a plurality of columns arranged in an array.

7. A method of storing a plurality of blister packages between manufacturing process stations, said method comprising the steps of:

a) providing a container having a bottom panel and one or more side panels defining an open top and an interior;

b) forming one or more columns in said container interior, said one or more columns extending uninterrupted from said bottom panel to said open top;

c) depositing a plurality of stacked blister packages in said one or more columns;

d) providing a package dispenser for dispensing said packages from said container, said package dispenser including one or more push rods for inserting through said bottom panel and into a respective column, said push rod operable to engage and push the stacked blister packages out of said container through said open top.

8. The method of claim 7 and further comprising the step of providing a secondary receptacle into which said blister packages are delivered directly from said container using said dispenser.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said secondary receptacle is a metal tower used for feeding blister packages to a manufacturing process station.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said process station is a cartoning machine.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein said container is formed of cardboard.